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ABSTRACT

This study examined the culture of the Hungarian English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classroom, using ethnographic methods, describing it in terms of teacher and student behavior and contrasting those behaviors with those of American students and teachers. The results are presented in an effort to help American teachers entering such instructional contexts to understand student behavior as a function of their cultural role. The population examined consisted of 17 teachers and 30 classes (approximately 15 students per class) at five secondary schools in one city. Data were gathered using participant observation by an American teacher (the author) and ethnographic interviews. Student interviews were brief and informal, with some conducted in groups; teacher interviews were longer and more formal. Formal interviews were also conducted with two Hungarian education experts, two British educational experts working in Hungary, two Hungarian university ESL teachers, and four Americans working in Hungary. Results show several cultural themes contributing to culture conflict: the expectations that teachers are responsible for all aspects of their students' education; teacher behavior conditioned more by the culture than by written rules; total student dependence on teachers; and unrealistic student expectations of teachers, accompanied by little respect. Details and implications are outlined. Contains 29 references. (MSE)

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CULTURE SHOCKED: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE HUNGARIAN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

by

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1996

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ABSTRACT

Effective EFL instruction requires a good deal of cultural understanding on the part of the instructor. This understanding is often gained only after the instructor's culture and the culture of his/her students have clashed. Often, this cultural clash damages the teacher-student relationship. It can also impede effective language instruction and learning. Therefore, instructors must gain as much cultural knowledge of their future classroom as possible.

The author, as an EFL instructor in Hungary through the Soros foundation experienced cultural clashes with his students. The worst of these hampered his ability to teach effectively and even caused him to dread teaching certain classes. As a result of this frustration, he resolved to determine possible sources of these clashes. Subsequently, he conducted more than thirty hours of "participatory observations" of EFL classes in secondary schools and more than ten hours of "ethnographic interviews" with Hungarian EFL teachers and students (Spradley 1980).

FINDINGS:

From the above data, the author, using Spradley's "D.R.S. method" (1980), discovered several cultural themes which had contributed to the clashes. In this thesis, he presents the teacher and student behaviors which result from these themes within the framework of the Hungarian education system and shows their possible affect on his EFL teaching experience in Hungary. Finally, he will give suggestions as to how EFL and ESL teachers may use this cultural knowledge to their advantage.

INTRODUCTION:

General background and Statement of the Problem

The effect of culture clashes on educational success has been fairly well documented in cases involving minority students in majority classrooms and dominant culture teachers in minority culture dominated classrooms. However, the issue of culture clash in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom has only begun to be addressed. Further, it has been addressed only with the goal of assimilation ease in mind. Finally, the issue of culture clash in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, other than anecdotal experience pieces, remains virtually unexplored.

This study, then, hopes to begin the process of examining the cultural aspects of EFL teaching and learning, and more specifically, the unique problem that EFL educators face in that they must contend with teaching in a completely new culture (societal, educational, school, and classroom) without having any real background knowledge in that culture. They cannot, therefore, understand and fulfill their role as teacher in this new culture, nor can they understand their students' behavior as a function of their cultural role. This study hypothesizes that this inability to perform and understand their students' performance leads to a mutual cultural clash which damages the teacher-student relationship, impedes teaching and learning, and sets up the teacher and students for failure.

Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this study then is to examine, through ethnographic research, the culture of the Hungarian EFL classroom and describe it in terms of teacher and student behavior and then contrast these behaviors to those of American students and teachers. From this understanding and comparison then, I propose that EFL

teachers should undertake to glean a basic understanding of the educational culture in which they find themselves teaching and at the same time attempt to help their students to understand the educational culture of the teacher. Through this understanding, it is hoped that teachers and students will be able to better interact in the classroom and thereby teach and learn more effectively.

The significance of my study, then, is that it will provide future EFL teachers and researchers with information on the culture of the Hungarian EFL classroom and how this culture differs from American educational culture in general. It will also suggest the importance of mutual cultural in the EFL classroom and some steps toward the fostering of this understanding. In order to understand this study in full, one must have an understanding of the terms used in it.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The first term is ethnography or as Spradley (1980) puts it, " the work of describing a culture" (p. 5). The next and most important term to understand is culture. Spradley (1980) defines culture as "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior" (p. 6). Further, he states that this knowledge is made up of two distinct types: explicit or conscious and tacit or unconscious knowledge. The last term necessary for readers to understand this study is cultural clash. This occurs when two individuals from differing cultures interact and their cultural expectations for this interaction are not met.

I hypothesize, then, that 1) Hungarian and American teachers and students behave differently in their respective language classrooms, 2) that this behavioral difference is a manifestation of underlying differences in their classroom cultures, and 3) that these differences can lead to a mutual culture clash between American teachers and Hungarian students which then impairs teaching and learning in these classrooms.

METHODS

The population I examined was Hungarian teachers and students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the secondary level. The sample I actually observed was seventeen teachers of EFL and thirty separate classes with differing levels of English language exposure and ability containing an average of 15 students per class at five separate gimnaziums (secondary schools) in Debrecen, Hungary. Further, I observed my own EFL classes (seven separate classes with two hours average instruction time per week per class) over a nine-month period. This sample was chosen because these schools, teachers, and students were available and willing to be observed.

I conducted an ethnographic study using procedures outlined by two texts by Spradley, Participant Observation (1980) and The Ethnographic Interview(1979). The former text describes a "systematic approach to anthropological field work" (175) called the Developmental Research Sequence Method. This twelve-step method shows how to conduct and write an ethnography, a study of a culture. The most vital facet of this method is its description of participant observation from the general to the specific: kinds of participant observation (non-participation, passive, moderate, active, and complete), kinds of observations, and kinds of cultural questions to try and answer through observations. In short, this text takes the ethnographer through all the steps towards making a cultural study of a scene through watching the scene. The majority of my study involved participant observation. I spent about 30 hours observing Hungarian-taught EFL classes and more than three hundred hours observing my own classes. I acted as a moderate observer in the classes I observed, excluding my own, of course. Moderate observation is defined by Spradley (1980) as "seek[ing] to maintain a balance between participation and observation"(60). In short, I was a known element in the classroom, yet I did not generally interact with the teachers or students.

The second Spradley text, The Ethnographic Interview(1979), describes conducting an ethnography through interviews. It follows the same basic D.R.S.

method as the first text, except that it involves a type of interviewing system of cultural informants. These interviews are designed to get at the underlying beliefs behind the actions in a cultural scene. I found that they were very useful, because the interview questions came directly out of the observations I had already made and thereby provided me with even greater insights into the classroom culture, e.g. I saw teachers performing many tasks and I asked them about each task and how they felt about it. I used these interviews to a lesser extent than observations and conducted approximately 10 hours of cultural interviews: two formal interviews with Hungarian education experts, two formal interviews with British EFL experts working currently in Hungary, four formal interviews with Hungarian EFL teachers at the high school level, thirteen short informal interviews with Hungarian EFL teachers at the high school level, two informal interviews with Hungarian EFL teachers at the university level, four informal interviews with Americans working in Hungary, and three informal interviews with groups of Hungarian EFL high school students.

The most informative of these interviews was certainly the longer, formal interviews with the Hungarian secondary EFL instructors. Two of these interviews were particularly important as they helped me to see teacher and student behavior through the teachers' eyes. In order to discover the underlying beliefs behind these behaviors, I asked these two instructors, my Hungarian EFL colleagues, to put student and teacher behaviors in groups and label them as they saw fit. It is important to note that they had similar educational backgrounds (5-year university degrees in English), were of similar age (30's), marital status (married), and had both taught for about five years. The resulting groups and shortened and abbreviated comments are to be found in Appendix A. Since these two teachers had a great deal in common, most of what they held different beliefs about is probably not generalizable to the whole of Hungarian EFL teaching culture. However, the beliefs that they hold in common are probably generalizable, at least to teachers similar to themselves.

The independent variable for this study was American and Hungarian culture, and the dependent variables were the behaviors of American teachers and students and Hungarian teachers and students. The control variables were individual teacher and student behavior and type and number of schools.

One limitation of this research design is that the research was all conducted by one researcher (me), and I went through cultural adjustment and was adjusting to the environment I was studying. However, my observations of many Hungarian students and classes as well as my own students and classes enabled a more or less objective viewpoint of the culture. Another limitation of this study is that I conducted my research in one geographical region and at one level of the educational system. However, since Hungary still retains much of its nationalized curriculum and is for the most part culturally homogeneous, the data should be indicative of the country and education system as a whole.

FINDINGS:

Before my teaching experience in Hungary, I believed that being an effective EFL/ESL instructor required the skills of any competent instructor: a solid knowledge of methods and subject matter, flexibility, commitment, the desire to learn and grow, and above all, the ability to motivate one's students and oneself. I felt fairly confident that, despite my lack of experience, I possessed these necessary qualities and that I would do a reasonably adequate job. It was this belief, and perhaps an overdeveloped desire to access my students' needs and interests that led to an academic year which at the time seemed futile in the extreme. What I did not understand and was unprepared for was the very real cultural differences between the Hungarian EFL classes in general or more specifically my EFL classes and American ones. As I had had course work which addressed cultural differences in the ESL/EFL classroom prior to my teaching experience in Hungary, this unpreparedness stemmed not from an educational insufficiency, but rather a dearth of specific, relevant, cultural information for this setting.

The difficulties I experienced in the classroom, probably due to the aforementioned lack of knowledge, fell into two categories: discipline and motivation. These difficulties were actually results of mutual cultural misunderstanding and differences. I found that a rather large number of my students had little interest in learning English (as I understood it). Further, I received only a fraction of the assignments I gave out and had problems with disruptive behavior in my classes. Students also showed unwillingness to do homework, participate, or pay attention. Complaining and frequent student absences also plagued my classes.

My responses to these problems varied from class to class, but in general, I tried every means at my disposal to spark my students interest in learning English. I used games, music, role plays, short stories, novels, tabloid newspapers, storytelling,

puzzles, and American magazines. Each of these attempts either failed outright or was successful only for a couple of class periods and then the students became bored. I also ceased to give assignments outside of class time. I ignored or became used to most the disruptive behaviors and tried to teach over or around them. I asked my students what they wanted to accomplish in my English classes; most had no suggestions or ideas, but I entertained all reasonable ones (grammar points, preparation for their final exams, etc.). Often, the students were more resistant to their own ideas than they had been to mine. I complained to the head English teacher, the class form masters (ostalyfonök), and even the head mistress of my school about student absences with little success. In some cases, I allowed students to do whatever they wanted during my classes as long as it did not disturb the few students who actually wanted to learn English. Finally, at one point, I failed an entire class for a term, and refused to teach a section of students at all.

Through this study, I was able to create a picture of what the underlying culture of the Hungarian EFL classroom is. From this picture, I was then able to understand why I experienced the above problems in my classes. My students and I had no concept of what the other expected or why the other behaved as he/she did. We were experiencing mutual culture shock. Spradley (1980) in Participant Observation, defines culture as "*the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior*"(p.6) Therefore, in every human interaction, there are certain cultural rules of behavior, certain cultural norms of communicating that are always in operation. Further, Spradley states that "a large portion of our cultural knowledge remains *tacit*, outside our awareness"(6-7). In other words, we are conditioned by our culture.

Cultural conditioning is apparent only once one is exposed to a culture different from one's own. This exposure often leads to cultural bumps. Carol Archer, in her text designed to assist foreign students adjust to life in the United States, Living With Strangers In The U.S.A.: Communicating Beyond Culture, states that this

happens when two or more individuals interact, and each follows her/his own cultural norm for behavior in the situation(45). When each individual's expectations are not met by the other's action, a culture bump ensues. When I acted in ways inconsistent with the cultural norms of Hungarian teachers and when my students acted in ways inconsistent with American students cultural norms, we experienced culture bumps.

The cultural norms of behavior for Hungarian teachers directly relates to their roles within the educational system. They have, for the most part, much greater responsibilities than their American counterparts. This responsibility is dramatically evident in the sixty plus separate teaching duties (see Appendix A) which I observed or which the teachers mentioned during the formal and informal interviews. One might expect some of these responsibilities: taking attendance, addressing the class, watching for and preventing cheating, making students speak English, choosing and creating activities, disciplining students on an individual basis, maintaining classroom discipline, and so on.

Other duties are more unusual by American standards: choosing texts, bringing naplok to class and writing in naplok (daily journals of what was taught, student attendance, grades, etc.), making students study, making students understand, questioning students (feleles), justifying grades, and giving marks (orally). Further, certain of these behaviors provide telling insights by themselves and in relation to the teachers' comments. At this point, I will be examining twenty Hungarian EFL teachers behaviors in light of classroom observations, teachers' responses, and my own experiences. The behaviors which will be examined are shown in bold face type in Appendix A.

The first behavior, watch for and prevent cheating, is interesting for two reasons. The most interesting part of this behavior is that cheating was observed so frequently by the author that he came to expect that his students would cheat or try to cheat on every task, from homework, quizzes, and tests to ungraded activities and surveys. Evidence of widespread cheating was also seen on the student's desks in different classrooms: in one classroom more than half of the desks had mathematical equations, German vocabulary and grammar points, or smeared remnants of writing. Cheating on some form of test or quiz was observed in one hundred percent (6/6) of the Hungarian EFL classrooms in which tests or quizzes were observed. Of the students in these classes, fifty-seven percent (52/90), were actually observed cheating.

In these observations, the author witnessed between seventy and one hundred percent of the students engaged in the following cheating behaviors: looking at answers written either on their hand, in a notebook, or on the desk; whispering answers to one another, and simply reading answers off each other's tests. In my own classes, at least some of my students tried to cheat on every test I administered to them. Further, all (34/34) of my best (the three highest and most communicative groups) students when asked about cheating stated that cheating was something that almost everyone did and that "it is good because often we don't have enough time to study everything" and "it makes doing homework and tests easier." Yet, the two teachers I interviewed at my school (A referred to a "Cathy" and B referred to as "Sofia"), verbally stated that they did not allow cheating and even gave ones (F's) to students who were caught cheating. This statement is particularly odd when during an observation of one of Sofia's classes all of her students were observed cheating on the exam. When Sofia looked up from her desk, where she was correcting papers, she responded to the students whispering and turning around by saying the student's name or shaking her head. She never noticed the female student who looked at her

hand (covered in notes). Some students actually exchanged papers, or, occasionally opened their textbooks during the same exam.

The strong negative responses these teachers gave regarding cheating are more baffling not only in light of the massive amounts of cheating observed, but also by the fact that only one teacher was observed actually trying to prevent cheating. She made five different versions of one exam for one of her classes. Also, on one occasion, she was observed taking a student's test paper away and giving her a 1 (F). Other teachers were less active in their prevention of cheating: telling students not to whisper, shaking their heads, and occasionally looking at the students. Further, cheating was, by no means restricted to English classes. In one senior class, 19 out of 25 students were caught cheating on the final exam (matura) in Mathematics. Instead of failing the exam, not being able to graduate, and having to retake their senior math class again next year, the students were made to take the exam over. The math teacher and head mistress were very upset by the students behavior, but the state authority and administrator of the test, a mathematics professor, who had himself caught the students, simply made them take the exam over.

The second behavior of note, collecting homework (hazifeladat), is interesting only in that neither Cathy nor Sofia do it. I gave many homework assignments throughout my nine months teaching and received a meager percentage of these assignments. Only in retrospect, can I see why so few of my students did or handed in my assignments. Although most of the Hungarian EFL teachers were observed giving homework assignments, only one was seen asking her students to hand in an assignment. " Where are the compositions you were supposed to write last week? If you have them, give them to me, if not Wednesday's the deadline." Only a couple of students actually handed in their papers. In another instance, a teacher at a different school, when faced with an entire class which had not done the homework for that day, had her students do the assignment in class. As a punishment, she made them write in complete sentences, and she also gave them another assignment and a

comprehension test to complete by the end of the class period. This may sound harsh, but I observed this class three times, and it was without question the worst behaved class of all those in the sample. This observation day was the quietest of the three days.

The typical use of homework is to get students to practice or memorize a structure or passage and then have between one and three students recite their answers for the teacher and the class (feleles in Hungarian). For example, Cathy began her class by calling upon a female student and having her recite the basic storyline in the book in her own words. She did so haltingly for six minutes and was obviously not well prepared. Cathy, then, gave her a grade of *2* (D) and then told her in Hungarian that it could have been worse. There seemed to be two basic patterns of recitation: the more traditional pattern where students are asked to stand and recite their homework as above, and the more relaxed and common pattern where students remain seated and simply answer the teacher's questions or read their work for the rest of the class.

This recitation or feleles is also mentioned by Patricia A. Duff in her 1995 article "An Ethnography of Communication in Immersion Classrooms in Hungary." There she states that this practice is "the most common form of assessment and rehearsed public speaking in Hungarian classes from the primary school level right through to university."(514) She further states that it occurs daily in nearly every lesson and that students do not know when their turn will come. Feleles was observed in most classes, except for those in which homework had been assigned and was reviewed in class. Because feleles are so common, students often take their chances and hope that they are not going to be chosen to recite. As more students do not recite than do, there was little need for every student to actually do the assignments.

This recitation process is often followed immediately by the fourth behavior, oral grading of the student(s) in front of the class as a whole. This behavior horrified me the first time I witnessed it, in the above example. I imagined a student

humiliated by her/his failure or success. Cathy and Sofia both stated that oral giving of marks was a traditional practice. One thought this practice was acceptable and the other was not certain whether it was good or not. Both intended to continue giving grades orally. Also, observations showed that oral grading was de rigeur. This practice was seen only six times, but this was probably due to the fact that often teachers do not grade feleles and relatively few tests, etc. were observed being returned. Traditionally, every teacher in every class in every school gave grades orally for recitations, tests, and even final grades.

Another of my Hungarian colleagues, when asked about this practice, stated that it helped the other students to know what level of performance merited what grade and that students never complained about being graded in front of their peers.

The fifth behavior, making students pass, is in my opinion either the most tragic or the most mundane of the behaviors. The major difference between what was observed in relation to the Hungarian EFL classroom and what the author perceives this behavior to be like in the American educational circumstance was that it was not uncommon in Hungary to pass huge numbers of students who simply had not, by my account and their other instructors', attempted in any way to learn English. This ritual passing occurred every year in foreign language or other "elective" classes, and was even expected by the students, form masters (ostalyfönök), and teachers.

This kind of automatic pass was demonstrated in two of the courses I personally instructed. In one class, a fourth year "sports" class, most students never did the homework, never passed the quizzes, or participated in any way. In fact, three-fourths of the students in one class did not even attend the course regularly enough to merit any grade at all. However, when I complained about the students' lack of effort, I was told that they were "hopeless" by the head English teacher and that I should not waste my time on them. Sofia who also taught this group of students was told, after having failed several students for one term, that if their marks did not

improve, she might not get her bonus. Not surprisingly, all the students passed the class and the final exam she administered.

The second class, a fourth year class that I taught which received automatic pass treatment as well, exhibited much better behavior for their Hungarian teacher than for me. However, she informed me that a number of the students were not prepared to take the final exam and that some of the students were almost at the beginner level. I refused to instruct this class after the end of the second semester, as the students responded to none of my efforts and at times did not attend at all. In fact, this class never attempted to do any activities, never handed in any homework assignment, and only five of the twenty-one students ever spoke English. Yet, all of these students passed the class and (intermediate level) final exam. Such examples of 'wholesale passing would be hard to find in the United States. However, as one can see by Cathy and Sofia's responses, this is just one aspect of teaching English. It may be questionable or distasteful, but normal. Finally, the headmistress and head English teacher were not particularly upset by my refusal to instruct these students; One of my colleagues took them, and I was just asked to teach additional hours to my other classes.

The sixth behavior, speaking in Hungarian, is only of interest as it is so pervasive. The use of Hungarian in EFL classes increased as the quality of the school decreased. At the "worst" school, according to some Hungarian EFL teachers in Debrecen, I observed, the use of Hungarian by the teacher ranged from classes where Hungarian was the medium of instruction to classes where Hungarian was used only during translation activities or to gloss vocabulary. At the "best" school, according to some Hungarian teachers in Debrecen, I observed, the use of Hungarian ranged from only a pair of utterances to just the homework assignment. The use of Hungarian was deemed necessary by Cathy as she felt that if Hungarian was not used at least some of the time in the classroom, the students would simply give up. She stated that this was especially true for less advanced students.

This belief may well have some truth in it, particularly if one put it in the context of my classroom experiences. I am certain that for the two least productive classes I instructed the fact that I never spoke in Hungarian, nor could I to any real extent, certainly did little to boost their English speaking and/or learning confidence. A representative of the British Council in Hungary, Simon Gooch supports the above observations and interviews by stating that he had seen a few lessons in which the teachers felt that they should not use English and therefore taught classes in 90% Hungarian. This was because they believed their students would not understand if they spoke in English. This explanation for Hungarian use in the classroom does not excuse the common use of Hungarian to gloss vocabulary, give directions, and address students' questions, as teachers were often observed using Hungarian for linguistically simple tasks.

Though this author has no problem with the use of the native language in a foreign language classroom to facilitate language learning, the overuse of Hungarian by the teachers I observed translated directly into students believing that target language use was only necessary at certain times for certain activities in the classroom. As Cathy stated at a later time, "As the teacher speaks in Hungarian a lot of the time, the students are aware that they are Hungarian, and they don't understand why they should speak English." This hypothesis was supported further by observations in my classes and in other classes as well. There were only a few students in the courses I instructed who would voluntarily speak English. Most students responded to my questions, even simple yes/no ones, role call, and direct questions to them in English with Hungarian. Often, after I had given the students an in-class assignment or activity to do, one or more students would ask me "Mit kell csinalni (What has to be done)?" And sometimes, students, when asked to perform oral language activities, would ask in Hungarian if they had to do it in English. A couple of students in my classes flatly refused to speak English.

Although some of the above behaviors were only observed in the author's classes, one could postulate that these silent students would never be called upon or let off the hook after they stated, "Nem tudok" (I cannot) in other classes. Teachers often stated that they wished their students would speak in English more often, but many students were observed answering English questions in Hungarian and using Hungarian to ask simple questions as well. In one of many observed instances, a teacher asked a student a yes/no question in English, "Mike are you ready, now?" and the student responded with "Igen (yes)." The teacher took no notice of this. Often, even a simple language task like asking the teacher a question began with "Tanarnö (teacher)?" And once, my heart leapt when a student in the worst school asked, "Mit kell csinalni (What has to be done)?" after his teacher gave him an assignment. I had believed that only my students asked that question. Finally, when I observed some English final oral exams at my school, one student began one of her answers with "Hat (well)." In all but the "best" school, the only time students spoke in English was when they were directly asked to do so. Further, even at the "best" school, only one very advanced class contained students who freely spoke English. These students were without question some of the most motivated and talented high school English language students in Debrecen.

Further, it was not uncommon to observe Hungarian teachers suddenly switch in to Hungarian for no apparent reason. In the middle of a lesson on multi-word verbs, a teacher said, "To copy from one cassette to another. Ez mit jelent (What does this mean)?" One of her students then answered her query in Hungarian. In a second school, a teacher in the middle of a translation activity responded to a student's malformed English question, "Most of these things cost you nothing. Just to see a doctor?" with "Az absolut nem (Certainly not for that)."

In another school, a teacher asked, "Could you understand the story?" When the students did not respond immediately, she switched into Hungarian, asked the same question and gave the students two homework assignments for the next day.

This last behavior, giving simple orders and assignments in Hungarian was the most pervasive. One Hungarian teacher used Hungarian in her class only for orders like: "Csönd legyen (Quiet, please.)." When questioned about her use of Hungarian in her classes, she stated that she felt that her students listened to her more when she spoke in Hungarian. But, she was not the only teacher who seemed to believe that Hungarian was more powerful than English for directions and orders.

The seventh through tenth teacher behaviors, make students learn (memorize), make students study, get students to pay attention, and keep students interested, are perhaps the most foreign to American teachers. Of course, a good teacher always tries to inspire her/his students to learn. He/she also should be sincerely interested in her/his topic of instruction, and one would hope that this interest would be infectious. Further, a good teacher tries to involve her/his students in learning activities that are engaging and interesting. However, as most Americans would agree, students are ultimately responsible for their own learning; therefore, it is in their best interest to study, pay attention, and try to be interested in their studies. This is not true in Hungary in the least. A blatant example of the huge amount of responsibility placed on most Hungarian teachers is to be found in the attitude expressed in a colleague's paraphrase of a statement made by the headmaster of my school during a faculty meeting: if students don't do their homework, don't pay attention in their classes, and don't do well in these classes, it is the teacher's fault.

Further, both Cathy and Sofia agreed that making students learn (memorize), making students study, getting students to pay attention, and keeping students interested were good and that they tried to do them. Though, numerous memorization tasks and recitations with immediate oral grading insured students would memorize parts of the language and study, getting and keeping the students' attention was not easily accomplished. Hungarian EFL teachers often complained that their students "are not interested in anything."

One would think, therefore, that teachers would be very open to trying any activities to spark interest in their students. However, classroom observations found numerous examples of teachers making students do repetitive exercises, giving students translation activities, and only using the state's black and white, virtually picture-less textbook. Examples of dull and repetitive activities were observed primarily in the two worst schools. One of the most typical and mundane classroom tasks observed was the pattern drill. An example of this in the classroom involved the teacher asking many students questions out of the book; the students then would read the answers out of the book. An example of this pattern went like this: Teacher: "What do you call a person who plays the piano?" Student: "A pianist." Teacher: "Am I a pianist?" Student: "No." Teacher: "Are you a pianist?" Student: "No." Teacher: "If I were a pianist, I would play the piano. Do you, Andi, play the piano?" Student: "No." Teacher: " Why not?" and so on. The same teacher in the same school also had a group of students read their homework aloud for an entire period. This homework assignment involved translating a lengthy and dry passage regarding medical care and fees in England. This teacher was the head English teacher of the school.

On the other hand, some more interactive and interesting activities were observed as well. One teacher had her students learn some food words by looking at and translating a recipe from Winnie the Pooh's Cookbook. Another teacher gave her students situations from which they had to write dialogues in pairs and then role play these dialogues in front of the class. When the students were not performing, they were to fill in chart of questions about the situations they were observing. At a third school, the students were given the task of presenting a topic to their classmates in English. The presentations were to be at least ten minutes in length and in English. These more interesting activities were all observed at the three higher quality schools.

Even engaging activities often did little to spark students' interest. And, in fact the above classrooms were mildly chaotic to say the least. One common example

of a teacher getting and keeping students' attention was to constantly monitor student activity and keep them on task. For example, one teacher, after she gave the students a task, told her students: "Don't discuss it." then later in Hungarian, "Don't talk now, later we'll talk." Then, she clapped her hands and said again in Hungarian, "Be quiet."

Another similar means of getting and keeping a students attention was to constantly interact with (badger) the student. One extreme example of this involved the teacher calling on a student about once every five minutes. The first interaction followed an instruction, "Open your books quickly at page 112. Mike, are you ready now?" Mike responds, "Igen (yes)." Some moments later, "Your task will be ... Mike." Then five minutes later, following another instruction, "You need to know the measure of your busts, waists, and hips. Go on, Mike." Then moments later, after a gloss of vocabulary in Hungarian, "O.K. Mike?" Finally, five minutes later, after another instruction, "Open your books quickly. That was your homework... Mike what is your task?" Mike responds again, "Nothing." The teacher does not respond to Mike's final comment.

Another teacher became irate when a student repeated a question that had already been asked and stated, "Where are you? Would you join the land of the living? You didn't listen, not a word?" This kind of constant verbal monitoring was usually directed towards one to three students in the class who tended to be the most troublesome for that teacher.

In contrast to the above teaching duties, the eleventh teacher behavior should be very familiar, if frustrating, to virtually every American teacher. Helping slower students is one of the greatest challenges to any teacher who may already feel overworked and underpaid. In my classes, I often tried to pair the brighter, more advanced students with the ones who were struggling. I also monitored the struggling students' progress more carefully than the other students, offering help whenever I could. I did not, however, refrain from attempting to engage these

students in activities, speaking or otherwise. The fact that I expected my less advanced students to at least attempt to participate in my classes led to some interesting reactions on the part of my students. More than once, the less advanced student would respond with shock when I called on them: "En (Me)? Nem tudok (I cannot)." Other times, a classmate would stand up for the slower student saying that "She does not speak English."

Cathy and Sofia's responses also offer us very real insight into the Hungarian EFL classroom. Cathy helps slower students and thinks that this is positive, while Sofia, perhaps more honestly, wondered if these efforts were profitable. The latter teacher's questioning of the profitability of instructing slower students is a direct reflection of one of the fundamental beliefs that underlies this educational system. Simon Gooch, who has observed hundreds of hours of classroom instruction, stated that he had "rarely seen an attempt by teachers to include the whole class; they're teaching two or six or seven [students]."

In an informal interview, another Hungarian colleague stated that she usually taught to the best students in her classes, there usually were one or more, and those students were what made teaching worthwhile, supporting Mr. Gooch's statement. Observations also shed some light on the Hungarian EFL teachers' attitude towards slower students. One teacher at my school was observed repeating instructions and giving personal help, repeating the task in Hungarian, answering questions, etc. to her students many times during one class period. Another teacher in a different school allowed one student to sleep through her class without so much as waking him. Nor did she mention the student to me or speak with him after class.

Every Hungarian student's academic success is absolutely dependent on him or her testing well, and this dependence has an impact on the twelfth teacher responsibility, choosing textbooks. This duty was viewed by both teachers as positive. There is little surprise that both these instructors viewed this aspect of teaching in a positive light. According to the head English teacher of one of the

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observed schools, this current responsibility represents freedom from the old communist ways and the old communist education system. Under the old system there was only one textbook, one basic lesson plan, and one methodology from which to teach. All of these aspects of teaching were directly controlled by the government and strictly monitored in every classroom by a weekly government inspection. The books, instruction, and methodology all hooked in to the national curriculum, and the entrance and exit exams (maturas) for gimnaziums. This seamless whole offered no teacher independence and no opportunity for innovation.

Now, teachers are free to choose their own textbooks and teach pretty much as they wish in their classrooms. This has positive and negative aspects. Positively, new ideas, methodologies, and British EFL textbooks were observed to be used by some teachers in some schools. These explorations into modern EFL teaching were also reported by the aforementioned representative of the British Council in Hungary, Simon Gooch.

There exists, however, some very real negative aspects to individual teacher's choosing textbooks for their EFL classes. The first and perhaps most disturbing of these is the simple fact that the vast majority of Hungarian EFL teachers have little or no training in choosing textbooks. According to Martin Wedell--a British Council employee involved with the operation of the CETT program in Hungary, a program which has created a number of Centers for English Teacher Training--neither the five-year university level English teaching degree nor the three-year trade school English teaching degree offer courses in teaching methodology or practical textbook selection.

This lack of training is further exacerbated by the frequently lax stance that most schools have taken in the creation of their own individual curricula. What this means is that in some instances there are teachers selecting course books which are vastly too easy, too difficult, or completely out of sync with the textbooks the students used the year before.

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The worst example of this was observed when a teacher was complaining about her students being stupid. She stated further that they were taking two weeks to complete a chapter, rather than one. When I questioned her as to what was taking so long, she replied that the students often did not know eighty or more words in the chapter's readings.

Further, I asked which book the students were using now and which book had they used the year before? She answered that the students had used the state beginning book, Angol Nyelv Konyev I (English Book I), and now they were using a pre-intermediate Headway book. After examining the two texts I found that the state book in it's entirety contained only 200 vocabulary words and that there were that many new vocabulary words in only four chapters of the British text. The teacher was asking the students to learn more vocabulary in four weeks than they had learned in a year.

Another negative aspect of individual teacher selection of textbooks is that many teachers refuse to try new texts as the final exams are based upon the old state texts (Angol nyelvkönyvek by Dr. Budai Laszlo and Horváth József). Some teachers stated that they feared their students would be poorly prepared for the exams if they do not use the state texts. One teacher stated that the use of Angol nyelvkönyvek (English Language Books) serves to motivate the students as it is the official test and prepares students solely for the test (matura). Finally, the British and American textbooks are much more expensive than the state textbooks, and students are required to purchase their own textbooks. If one teacher in a school uses the state book and another uses a more expensive and a perhaps less effective test preparation book, students and parents may complain about the "innovative" teacher.

Despite some drawbacks to innovation, many of the teachers I interviewed and observed believed that it was a good idea to try new things in the classroom. Both Cathy and Sofia agreed that, the thirteenth and fourteenth behaviors, putting students in groups or pairs and writing on the blackboard, were good things, and

they claimed to do them. Further, activities like group and pair work, the use of realia, the use of audio and video cassettes, and role plays were all observed at least once during the forty hours of observations. Most of the innovative teaching took place at the three better schools. In truth, group work, realia use, and video cassette use were only seen once, and the group work went very badly, almost no English was used by the students. Pair work was only observed three times. A good example of the use of pair work was observed at one of the better schools. Here, the teacher wrote the following questions on the blackboard: "How are you getting on with your studies? What things do you write down in lessons? Do you always do your homework? How do you check there are no mistakes in your work before you give it up to your teacher? How do you think you will do on your future exams?" Then, she instructed the students "Find a partner for yourself." She bodily moved one student. Then she had the students take turns asking each other the questions.

The most prevalent innovative teaching methods involved the use of audio cassettes and was seen five times. However, some of these activities were seen used in strange, uncommunicative ways: One teacher played the tape while students read along in their books. Another teacher played the tape in order for the students to remember the storyline which they were supposed to have already read. A third teacher used a cassette on the effects of different colored clothing on one's external appearance to introduce different items of clothing and comparatives (bigger, smaller, etc.).

Finally, blackboard use was frequent, but it usually was mostly used to write down vocabulary and give phonetic spellings, which, according to Mr. Gooch, 90% of students do not understand. Many examples of this were observed usually with vocabulary pronunciation in mind "loose [lu:s], belt [belt], tight [tait]."

Further, Mr. Gooch, during our interview, stated that he had "never seen any group work, rarely seen true pair work... real communication between pairs, never seen any dictation, card or board games, realia other than a teddy bear once, choral

drilling, communicative drills in a pair-work situation, video, a diagram or any other way of showing vocabulary, shadowing (a cassette is played and students try to say it at the same time), a simplified reader, any work children have done on the walls, or any jokes or anecdotes from the teacher used as listening comprehension.

The next two teaching duties, fifteenth and sixteenth, making students understand and making students speak English, reflect some of the old methodology and some of the post-1989 innovations. They are considered the foundation of language learning for the majority of Hungarian teachers. Sofia viewed these teacher behaviors as being the most important teacher duties. Cathy stated that they were absolutely necessary. In fact, if teachers could make their students understand English and speak it, then they would be perfect teachers (a discussion of teacher and student expectations will follow later in this text). After all, what is the essence of knowledge of a foreign language but the ability to understand and speak that language.

Making students speak English usually was accomplished by teachers in four basic ways: through parroting, question and answer and feleles, and communicative activities. Parroting and question and answer were the most commonly observed means to encourage students' language production. One example of a teacher's use of parroting was observed at the "worst" school. The activity involved one student basically repeating numerous questions from a dialogue the class had been learning. It was made to appear communicative by giving the dialogue the context of taking place on a train as part of a murder investigation. One male student was chosen as the detective by the teacher, "Tim you will be the detective." Tim responded by asking what he had to in Hungarian. Then he said, "It happened where?" The teacher responded, "It happened in the compartment of an intercity train." Tim then asked a female student, "What's your name?" The female student gave her name. Tim continued, "What were you doing?" The female student responded, "I was reading a newspaper." Teacher interrupts, "You can take notes Tim. Ask questions about the

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purpose of her journey." Tim states, "What's your job?" The female student replies, "I am a teacher." Tim asks, "What do you teach?" The other students laugh. "I teach German," the female student answers. Other students are questioned, but the questions and answers do not lead to the solution of the crime.

Another kind of parroting, having students read their homework aloud, was also common. One teacher who I observed more than once used this activity every class period. One class period went along these lines. Students are given ten minutes to do an exercise in class. Then, the teacher says, "Let's see the letter then. Please read the first part." Teacher gestures to a male student. He reads his answer. Teacher says, "Correct." She, then, has a female student read her first part and then states, "What is your second sentence? Read it please." Student reads her sentence. Teacher then states, "I don't agree. What do you think it would be in Hungarian?" This activity continues through the rest of the hour.

More commonly, however, question and answer were the main tools for making students speak English. In almost every class, teachers asked students questions. Some were mechanical in the extreme; Teacher: "What do you say if a woman is going to have a baby?" Student: "Pregnant." Teacher: "What do you call if you pay money every week?" Student: "Contribution." Other examples were much more communicative; Teacher: "Will you answer some questions about your trip to Slovakia?" Another teacher: "Tell me about your weekend?" Such means of encouraging foreign language production do, to a certain extent, get students to speak English. Unfortunately, current foreign language theory holds that the ability to use a foreign language involves much more than the simple memorization of words and grammatical rules. Simplifying a language down to easily digested parts which can later be regurgitated as well-formed, competent utterances may work in the classroom, but it has little use in the real world.

Further, encouraging one's students to attempt to produce language by using interesting, communicative activities provides no guarantees either. One Hungarian

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teacher, during an interesting and communicative activity involving problem solving, finally resorted to threatening a group of her students, "If you don't speak in English, you each will get a one for today." After she went to check on another group, the students in the first group went back to speaking in Hungarian. But for a few pair activities at the better schools, students spoke in English only when closely monitored by their teacher. Further, it seems unlikely that anyone could coerce through non-violent means a student to understand or speak a foreign language. This is especially true when one's students do not care to and know that they do not need to do so.

This knowledge of the futility of trying to learn English, on the students part, stems from two sources. The first is the knowledge of the quality of their school and how this quality affects their chances of getting a good education, good teachers, and finally into college. The best students get into the best schools and therefore are given the best facilities, instruction, and opportunities. This culling of the student population into groups identifying their abilities and weaknesses is perhaps best shown by a Figure I (next page) of the education system before the implementation of the proposed National Curriculum of 1994.

As one can see from Figure I, the separation of the student population into poor, average, and good students occurs around the age of ten. However, each horizontal bar represents an opportunity for further delineation by testing. In short, one student must take at least three batteries of tests in order to go through the education system. Ultimately, it is important to understand that once a student has begun one track of learning, it is difficult if not impossible, to move to a higher track. As English is used in Hungary primarily for tourism and college entrance requirements, when a student enters a lower quality school and has little interest in becoming a tour guide, he or she can forget about college and the necessity of learning English.

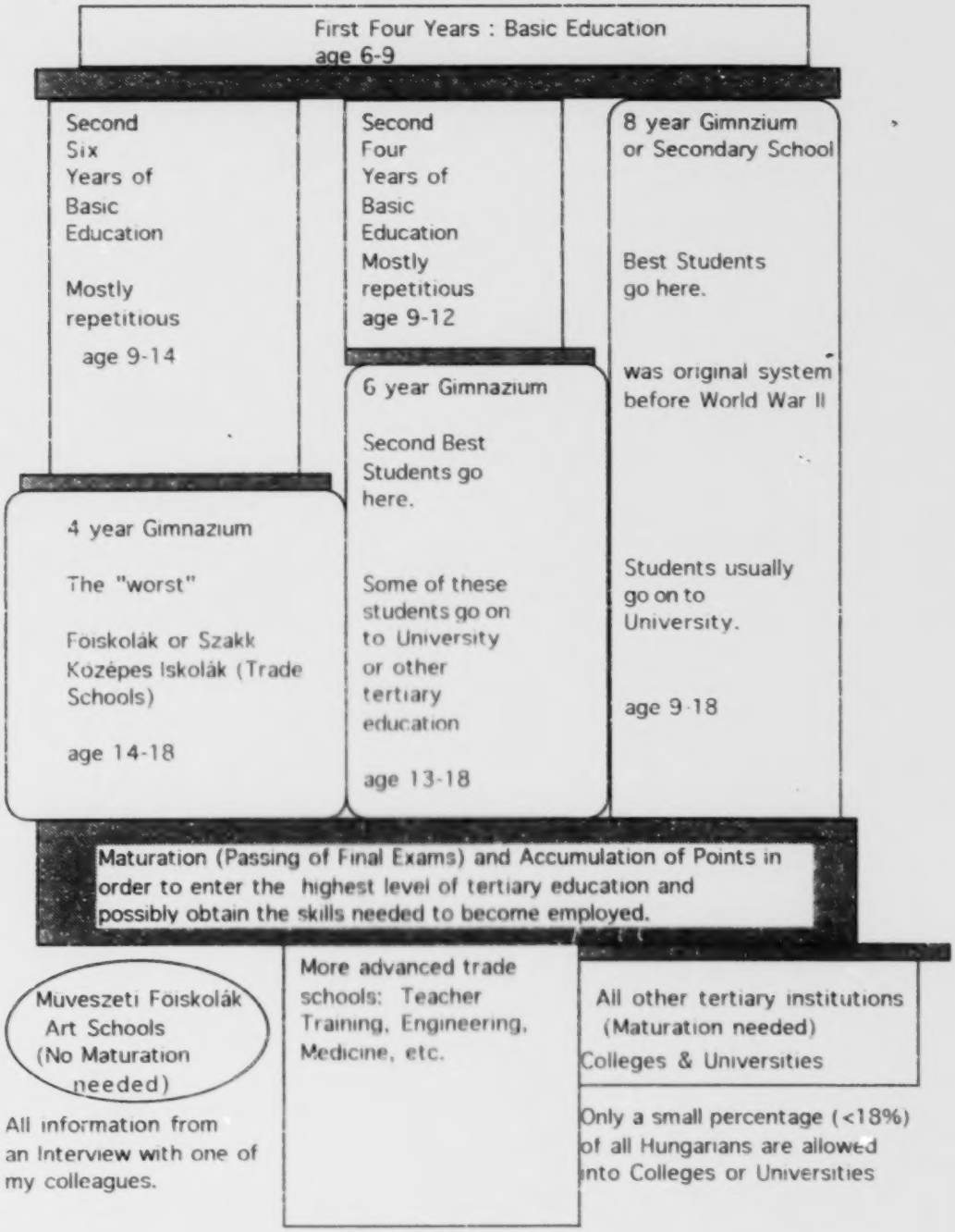
First Four Years : Basic Education
age 6-9
Second Six Years of Basic Education
Mostly repetitious
age 9-14
Second Four Years of Basic Education
Mostly repetitious
age 9-12
8 year Gimnzium or Secondary School
Best Students go here.
was original system before World War II
Students usually go on to University.
age 9-18
6 year Gimnazium
Second Best Students go here.
Some of these students go on to University or other tertiary education
age 13-18
4 year Gimnazium
The "worst"
Foiskolák or Szakk Középes Iskolák (Trade Schools)
age 14-18
Maturation (Passing of Final Exams) and Accumulation of Points in order to enter the highest level of tertiary education and possibly obtain the skills needed to become employed.
Müveszeti Foiskolák Art Schools (No Maturation needed)
All information from an Interview with one of my colleagues.
More advanced trade schools: Teacher Training, Engineering, Medicine, etc.
All other tertiary institutions (Maturation needed)
Colleges & Universities
Only a small percentage (<18%) of all Hungarians are allowed into Colleges or Universities

Figure 1

Diagram of the Hungarian Education System--
Grey Areas Represent Examination Periods

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The next two responsibilities of interest, seventeenth and eighteenth , model structures and translate English and Hungarian, are again part of teaching a foreign language. It is probably true that most foreign language instructors at some point engage in these behaviors. Hungarian EFL teachers are no exception. Modeling structures was in some cases the bulk of a teacher's lesson plan, as we saw in the example of pattern practice earlier. Another example of modeling structures being a large portion of a class period was observed when a teacher wrote: "What is it/are they made of ? and It's/ They're made of wood, plastic, wool, nylon, paper."on the blackboard. She, then, produced several items out of a bag and asked the questions while students answered them. Thirteen of the seventeen teachers were observed performing some modeling, and yet, neither Cathy nor Sofia claimed to model structures.

Further, Sofia claimed that translation of English and Hungarian, equally if not more pervasive, was not important. Examples of translation ranged from glossing vocabulary to explaining entire grammatical structures by translating them into Hungarian. This dichotomy is present, I believe, because the two teachers who I interviewed are on the cusp of being modern foreign language instructors and feel that they should be trying to use the best methods they can.

The next three teacher behaviors, nineteenth through twenty-first, all relate to student discipline, making students stand, etc., writing in the naplo (daily report book for an entire class), and enforcing Hazirend (school rules) have little or nothing to do with language teaching and language learning per se. They all revolve around the day to day struggle to make students behave.

Further, all of the above behaviors reflect the old way of teaching in Hungary. Almost every teacher I observed and interviewed wished his or her students were better behaved. This wish is in response to the fact that the traditional means of controlling student behavior, while still widely used, are toothless without the fear of communist party secret police and the inability to find work because of the lack of

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basic education (unemployment in Hungary has little relationship to education). As we will see in the next section, controlling student behavior is a constant and baffling problem for many Hungarian EFL teachers.

The first traditional method of controlling student behavior is the ritual beginning and ending of a class. The first time I witnessed this ritual, I was instantly reminded of an old Austrian movie "Der Blaue Engel" about a high school teacher who goes insane over Marlene Dietrich. The ritual begins when the teacher enters the room and says, "Good morning class." The students stand and say, "Good morning sir or miss;" a student reports on class absences, gives the date, etc. The teacher then says, "Would you please sit down." Then, the students sit. The class ends with the teacher saying: "Please stand. O.K. Goodbye."(see also Duff, 1995). Both Cathy and Sofia perform this ritual at least in part. Neither feel that it is good or bad. Most (20/30) Hungarian EFL classes I observed began this way. I never performed this ritual with my students, and it almost certainly had negative repercussions, as will be shown later.

The next behavior, writing in the naplo, I did engage in, as did many of the observed teachers. It is another leftover remnant of the carefully controlled communist system of the past. Both of the teachers I interviewed saw it has something they either do or must do. I, too, was required to keep careful record of who was present or absent, grades, and what was taught that day. However, I wrote in the naplo outside of class while the Hungarian teachers usually carried the naplo with them and wrote in it during class, in order to make clear to the students that they were doing so and therefore what the students did or did not do was noted. This distinction is important in that this behavior indicated to the students that their actions, grades, and participation were being noticed and recorded. All orally given grades were either read from the naplo or written in the naplo immediately after they were given. For example, a teacher told her students, "I would like you to look at the tests and ask any questions you have now." They asked no questions, so she said,

"Can you dictate me the grades now?" The students read their scores to her, and she wrote them in the naplo. If something is not recorded into the naplo, it may not have any later repercussions. Therefore, since none of my students saw me record their grades, behavior, participation, or absences in the naplo, they may have believed that these things were not being recorded at all. They may have therefore believed that I did not or could not give grades, rendering me impotent and my classes meaningless.

The last behavior, enforcing the Hazirend (school rules) found in Appendix C, was not done by Cathy or Sofia. These rules are, however, simple and straightforward in nature. For example, here are three of them: the pupils' appearance should be neat, steady, and aesthetic at school, on leaving the classroom the desks should be left clean, empty, and tidy, and during school time pupils are not to leave the territory of the school (not even in breaks or free periods). The rejection of these rules by the teachers is almost certainly a response to the communist era remembrances of these two teachers rather than any true rejection of the rules themselves. Other traditional rules, not to be found on the Hazirend, like no eating or drinking during class, the aforementioned before and after class ritual, no gum chewing, recitation, most teachers only sit when they are being passive (giving tests), and oral grading are/were followed and were observed many times. Most times, eating and drinking were the most common censured activities. For instance, one teacher began her lesson with "Stop talking. Put the food away quickly." Another teacher stated "Please don't eat during my lesson." Afterwards she gave a student a talking to about eating in her class and not having done his homework.

I was never shown or given a copy of the Hazirend, and certainly never told what rules I should follow in my classes. I allowed my students to eat and drink in my classes. After a while, however, I found that a couple of my students regularly came late to class in order to get something to eat or drink. Another of my students spent

more time eating in my classes than speaking English. This lack of knowledge of traditional and official rules of the classroom and the school also had a negative effect on my image as a teacher, as will be shown later.

As one can clearly see, Hungarian EFL teachers are faced with a huge amount of responsibility, and the expectations that are put upon them by society, the educational system, parents, students, and finally themselves are high. Yet, for all this responsibility, teachers are poorly paid and often not respected by their students or society in general. In fact, students in the schools in which I observed tended to be more disruptive, uncooperative, and disrespectful than one might imagine.

TEACHERS ON STUDENTS

In Appendix B, one can see thirty-two student behaviors which were termed by Cathy and others as "szemtelen or rendetlen (cheeky or with bad behavior)" and were observed one or more times during the participant observations. Cathy and Sofia were once again asked to group and label these behaviors. Their reactions/comments on each of these behaviors is also present in abbreviated form in Appendix B. This listing is of extreme interest as it shows in no uncertain terms the real cultural differences between Hungarian EFL teacher's and my beliefs and resulting behaviors.

The most telling of the student behaviors are those that the teachers stated happened every day. These were: making noises, talking in Hungarian, being late for class, and complaining about grades or homework. I know all too well that the statements of these two instructors are much more than exaggerations. In my own classes, I had two male students, one second year and one fourth year, who habitually made noises. One banged on his desk with a piece of wood almost incessantly. The other tapped his fingers, whistled, sung, clicked his pen, etc. Neither of these students were slow or evil, just noisy. In fact, the second two of these four behaviors

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I witnessed everyday in my own classroom. In addition, in other classes, I observed students making noises twice, slamming a desk drawer twice, fake snoring once, and whistling once. Speaking in Hungarian, really conversing in Hungarian with another student, is rampant. It was observed in virtually every classroom to a greater or lesser extent. Usually, I had at least two students per class who spent more time talking with each other than listening to me. If I stopped class and confronted them by asking them what they were talking about, the students would respond with "Semmit (nothing)" or tell me what they had been talking about (girls, boys, summer vacation, etc.). The students often refused to continue discussing what they were talking about with me or the class in English. However, after I went back to teaching, they would continue on with their conversation as if nothing had happened. These conversations were not whispers back and forth but conversations carried on at a normal conversational volume. I cannot begin to guess how many class hours I spent repeating instructions, assignments, etc. to students who had not been listening to me, but instead speaking to another student.

Other classes were observed with nearly as much conversing as mine. At my school, in one forty-five minute period, I observed Cathy tell her students to be quiet ten times. When I asked her if she was angry at them for misbehaving, she responded with a simple no. Under similar circumstances in my own classroom, I often became irate. My students would then behave well for the remainder of the class. However, the next day they would return to their disrespectful, in my eyes, ways. The teacher who felt no anger after having to repeatedly tell her students to be quiet was not alone. In another school, a teacher asked one female student who had been speaking to her desk-mate in Hungarian while another student read his answers to an activity, "Wendy, are you listening?" To which the student replied, "Yes. Csak beszelgetünk (we were just conversing)." The teacher then said, "How can you do that and listen?" The student had no answer.

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Finally, in another classroom in my school, I found a teaching situation which was much worse than any of my own. The class was completely out of control, chaotic in the extreme, and the teacher was unruffled by it. This teacher had been teaching for more than twenty years and had stated that she felt that students had gotten steadily worse over the years. The class that I observed alone almost proved her point. After the class, I asked her if she was upset about the students' behavior, and she stated that it was normal. This resignation to their fate was a common trait of many Hungarian EFL teachers who day after day faced students who had no respect for them or interest in learning whatsoever.

The last student behavior, being late for class, was at first a great shock for me. Almost all classes began at least five minutes late; teachers often would not even go to the classroom on time because it was useless to do so. Thus, as much as thirty minutes a week for the entirety of the students' academic career at the school might be lost with no hope of making up this time.

The repercussions in my classroom and others I observed of three of the above behaviors, making noises, talking in Hungarian, and being late for class were simple and yet profound. Valuable class time was often lost to asking students to be quiet, repeating instructions, and waiting for students to come to class. The most telling aspects of Cathy and Sofia's responses to student misbehavior are those behaviors deemed as the hated or worst ones: making noises, arguing with another student, hitting each other, refusing to do an activity, throwing things, making rude gestures at the teacher, swearing in Hungarian, being cheeky or talking back, cheating, and not bringing books or exercise books to class. However, one of the teachers was more tolerant than the other; Cathy had only four behaviors that she termed hated or worst, while teacher Sofia had six such behaviors.

To an American's eyes, the above behaviors may seem to be fairly trivial, little more than students acting out. And in fact, all but last two behaviors, cheating and not bringing books, exercise books, or photocopies to class, were only rarely

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observed. In the United States, if a student becomes too disruptive, the teacher generally sends him/her out of the room. In Hungary, this is illegal. So, since they had no real method for dealing with disruptive students, these two Hungarian teachers felt that these behaviors were the most viscerally disturbing and personal. Cathy and I shared a class. She dreaded teaching these students because one of them was frequently cheeky and often talked back. I enjoyed teaching these students because some of the students cared and sometimes they actual tried to learn. I simply ignored the one student in the class who was cheeky.

When students do not bring their books, exercise books, or photocopies for class, the teacher is either forced to postpone the activity, or make students share. Making students share was surprisingly difficult in my own classes. Often, students would refuse to share their books or photocopies for no apparent reason. A couple of teachers gave the reasons why students should not be given photocopies at all, forcing the teacher to use the book and nothing but the book. Cathy stated that "Students don't like paper (photocopies). They lose it. They can't use it later." Another teacher stated that she does not "make photocopies for them any longer. They just play with them." These behaviors, then, represent the most disturbing of an entire list of behaviors which they encounter frequently in that they challenge the teacher's power. This power was once absolute and total, but now, wanes as most Hungarian students view their education as powerless to guarantee them jobs as it once did.

In contrast to the above behaviors which did not bother me, the behaviors which I found the most disturbing, talking in Hungarian, copying notes or homework, reading magazines, reading and doing other homework, playing with a Gameboy or listening to a Walkman, refusing to do an activity, ignoring the teacher, not attending or being late to class, cheating and not bringing their books, all revolve around two basic problems. The first of these is a general lack of interest in the subject or disrespect for the teacher, and the second is that often the

disinterested students prevented the rest of the students from learning by taking away from teaching and learning time.

We have already looked at examples of students conversing in Hungarian and cheating, and playing with a Gameboy or listening to a Walkman only occurred twice in my classes. So, it makes sense to focus on copying notes or homework, reading magazines, reading and doing other homework, refusing to do an activity, ignoring the teacher, not attending or being late to class, and not bringing their books. I had several students who regularly brought magazines, other homework, or notes to class with full intent on using my class as a sort of study hall. I observed students in other classes doing other things (never reading magazines, though) during their English classes, but never so openly as my students did. True, they usually hid the magazines. But, frequently, the student would simply put their homework, notes, etc. on top of their desk and do it. When confronted by me asking "What are you doing?" the student often responded with "Math." or "History." Ignoring the teacher usually went hand in hand with conversing in Hungarian.

The biggest problems I faced with my students were being late for class or not attending my class. While most English classes at my school were observed starting between three and fifteen minutes late, my classes were always at least five minutes late in starting. Often, one or more students would come in after the majority. One day, an entire class of mine was fifteen to twenty minutes late. Once, a student even came to one forty-five minute class thirty minutes late. Poor attendance was common and even more disturbing to me. One of my classes stopped attending altogether on Fridays. In another class, half of the students regularly did not attend. When I complained to the head teacher, she talked to the ostalyfönök (form master) who stated that he had thought that my classes no longer met on Fridays and had told his class this. It took a week for some of these students to come to my class on Fridays again. This lack of attendance meant a complete lack of continuity in these classes often rendering any activity that built on the previous one useless. Other of these

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behaviors meant that I usually couldn't start class on time, I usually had to repeat instructions many times, and that ultimately I could not expect my students to put forth any genuine effort towards learning English.

Even the most enjoyable of activities, in which students had fun and used English, never inspired students to work towards learning English in any real way. For example, I experienced some success with my less motivated students when I used games in the classroom. Pictionary, Guesstures, and one EFL board game which involved individual students speaking for one minute on a topic were all popular and successful. All of my students, but one, had fun, produced language, and participated in these activities. But, after two or three class periods over a three to four month period, they became bored with these games and would not play them any longer. After the successful game-based class periods, the students showed no heightened interest in or motivation to learn English. Success, at least in this case, did not breed success.

STUDENTSONSTUDENTS

Why were so many students uninterested in English? In truth, most of my students stated that they wanted to learn English on a survey. However, many of these students felt either that they could not learn English, their teachers were not good, or that they need not learn English. The students who felt that they could not learn English probably made up the highest percentage of my students. Most had taken English between two and ten years, and in this period of time had concluded that they could not use the language in any real way. Therefore, they just gave up.

This hypothesis is borne out by what one teacher said,"When I speak English only, some students just give up. If they don't understand something, they might not even try to learn it." Further, observations of my classes--particularly those classes in which student absences and refusals to participate were common, and in which students rarely did their assignments or paid attention--add even more weight to this hypothesis.

The last and perhaps most convincing proof for this argument comes from students themselves. One group of my students stated that if they did not understand a lesson, they usually did nothing about it. This apparent giving up behavior brings us then to the problem of not having good teachers. The above group of students stated that there was only one good English teacher in their school. Another group of students stated that there were few good teachers in that school. A third group of students stated that there were no good teachers in that school. It seems hard to believe that a school with eight English teachers, one a native speaker, would have at the most three good teachers.

GOOD TEACHER BAD TEACHER

Perhaps, then, it would help to understand what a good Hungarian teacher is. A good teacher, according to teachers, explains clearly, makes sure students understand before moving to a new topic, tries to not be boring, talks with students before and after lessons, is interested in students' lives, is interested in whether students like their lessons or not and tries to make them like them, knows a lot about the topic, and can answer every question. A good teacher, according to students, gives more homework, is easy to understand, is usually male, is strict, is interesting, repeats things in the book often, expects the students to pay attention and learn (memorize) the lesson, knows everything in the book and adds some more, but not too much.

On the contrary, a bad teacher, according to teachers, just speaks, cannot see in the children's faces if they like the lesson, does not teach, does not want to give a lot of information-only what is necessary, and is boring. A bad teacher, according to students, reads the lesson, is stupid, is cruel, allows no questions, cannot explain anything, and is boring.

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From these two perspectives, one can conclude that a good teacher is able to take any subject matter and change it into something that can be easily explained to the students who then memorize it and regurgitate it later. He/she repeats what is in the book without reading it and adds to it without burying the students. And finally, he/she is personable and intelligent. As we saw before, a good number of my students felt that there were no good English teachers in my school. This was probably due to the inherently paradoxical nature of the students' idea of a good teacher. It is difficult to believe that a teacher could repeat things in the book often, make the material easy to understand, expect students to memorize the lesson and yet not be boring or cruel. After all, repeating the material in the book often and making this material easy to understand seems to imply boring the students, just as expecting students to memorize the lessons and being strict seems to imply cruelty.

As few Hungarian EFL teachers meet the students' criteria for being good, it is, therefore, easy to understand how students might be disappointed with and give up on a teacher who does not use a standard textbook, no less repeat what is in it, challenges them with material which they cannot readily understand, does not and cannot use Hungarian to gloss vocabulary or explain material, does not know and enforce traditional rules and regulations in the class, and who expects them to find their own answers and explanations. This teacher is not obeying the rules of the Hungarian EFL classroom and is defying the cultural norms which have created these rules. This is a bad teacher. I was that teacher.

Does this explain why I experienced so much difficulty teaching my students? Maybe. After all, several groups of students stated that bad students misbehave in class and are caused by bad teachers. Further, I witnessed drastically more student discipline problems in the lower quality schools than I did in the higher quality schools. Also, my fellow Soros fellows who were all instructing in higher quality gimnaziums rarely complained of poor attendance, misbehaving, or disinterested students.

What some of my American colleagues did complain about, however, and what Eran Williams published in the first issue of the Soros English language teaching program newsletter (1995) was that students play:

> a non-active role in the educational process. That is to say, the students are not used to searching for and evaluating data, only memorizing it. Students are not used to exercises where they are asked to present their opinions or think about hypothetical situations. ... My greatest desire is to get the students to look up from their hunched-over study postures and ask a question or show signs of caring for reasons other than making the grade. ... they are as hard-working and as determined as any. I only wish that their intelligence wasn't spent on such rote learning (sic).

This statement that Hungarian students are only interested in making the grade, the focus on rote learning, and the penchant for exams and recitations is hardly a surprise when put into the context of the Prussian education system (Paulsen, 1912). Eran Williams, and perhaps most Americans view teaching and education as a means to an end. I, too, wanted to help my students to learn what they needed and wanted to learn. But, I also wanted to open new vistas for them, inspire them to take their learning into their own hands, and finally to believe that they could use English in the classroom and the world at large. I felt then and feel now that I failed to accomplish these goals with the vast majority of my students. This was due at least in part to my failure to be a good teacher in their eyes and their failure to be good students in mine.

GOODSTUDENTSBADSTUDENTS

My failure to be a good teacher has already been explored, but their failure to meet my expectations as a teacher remains. The simple fact is that Hungarian teachers and students believe that good students are and do one thing, while Americans believe good students are and do other things. According to Hungarian EFL teachers good students want to learn, behave well in class and on the street, respect adults, are clever, and are interested in many things. A good student,

according to students, learns (memorizes) the lessons, gets 5's (A's), pays attention during lessons, and listens to the teacher. While none of these Hungarian beliefs is anathematic to American ones, several important American ideals are lacking from them. In short, the ability to learn independently, think critically, form one's own opinions, and take responsibility for and participate actively in one's education are all conspicuously missing from the Hungarian beliefs. Finally, in the American ideals there is little emphasis on memorization and much less emphasis on teacher directed learning.

CONCLUSIONS:

From the above data, I, using Spradley's "D.R.S. method" (1980), discovered several cultural themes which had contributed to the clashes. The first of these was that Hungarian EFL teachers are responsible for all aspects of their students' education. The second was that these teachers' behavior was conditioned by their culture more so than by written school rules. The third was that Hungarian students are totally dependent upon their teachers. The fourth was that despite this dependency, they have unrealistic expectations of and little respect for their teachers. In this thesis, I presented teacher and student behaviors which resulted from these themes within the framework of the Hungarian education system and showed their possible effect on my EFL teaching experience in Hungary. Finally, I will give suggestions as to how EFL and ESL teachers may use this cultural knowledge to their advantage.

Now, I will address what the above cultural themes mean in real terms for EFL teachers going to Hungary. As Hungarian EFL teachers are responsible for all aspects of their students' education, you as their teacher will be responsible for all aspects of their education. With motivated students in a high quality school, bilingual or otherwise, you will just be responsible for teaching the students. With unmotivated students for whom English is little more than an empty exercise, like most of the students I taught, you will have to try to motivate these students. This may or may not be possible over time. The younger and more linguistically advanced the students are the more hopeful they tend to be. So, try to secure a position at a good school or prepare yourself for the long and possibly futile task of motivating students. I suggest that you try and find some means of making the ability to speak, read, and write English useful for your students. Such possibilities exist in the World Wide Web, pen pals, and study abroad programs. When none of these possibilities seem feasible, you can certainly try the more fun, communicative, and successful activities I used: Pictionary, Guesstures, some EFL board games which involve

individual students speaking for one minute, and some confrontation-based role plays.

Also, the EFL teacher in Hungary should certainly make use of the knowledge in this paper of traditional, cultural, rules of the classroom. Do not allow your students to eat, drink, or chew gum in class. As one of my female students said, "If a teacher allows me to eat in class, I think if I can do this then maybe I can do this and this ..." Make students go through the stand and report ritual at the beginning and end of your classes. Police all activities and sit down only when you are certain that the students will be on task without your constant policing. Expect some students to be less than attentive to your lessons. Give grades orally and bring and write in the naplo during class so your students understand that they are being graded. Do not give up hope entirely.

Next, as Hungarian students are totally dependent upon their teachers, try and help your students. They are in some cases very dependent on you teaching them what they need to know. The grades you give may make the difference between students going to college or not. Do not ignore important test preparation activities as being uncommunicative and boring; they are vital to your students' future.

Finally, as your students often have unrealistic expectations of and little respect for their teachers, try to meet at least some of the above expectations at the beginning of the year. Once you have gained their respect, you will be more likely to be able to engage in more communicative language teaching. In time, your students may be able to adapt to your ideas and ways and you may be free to teach as you wish.

In conclusion, I failed to meet the culture-bound expectations of my students just as they failed to meet my own culture-bound expectations of them. They felt that I was a bad teacher, and I felt that they were bad students. We experienced mutual culture clashing. This shock was made worse by the fact that we both came from dominant cultures and therefore saw no reason to learn no less conform to the

other's cultural norms. This clash hampered the teaching and learning in our classroom.

What can be done to minimize future cultural clashes between teachers and students of differing cultures? The answer to this question is simple. One must undertake to promote understanding on both sides of the cultures involved. The teacher must understand the classroom culture of the country he/she is teaching in, and also attempt to help her/his students understand the classroom culture from which he/she comes.

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Appendix A: Chart of Teacher Responses to Teacher Behaviors

ACTIONS	A	B
1.Provide structure for the class	+	+
2.Monitor students' behavior	N	N
3.Discipline students	+	+
4.Watch for and prevent cheating	+	+
5.Collect homework	ND,?	ND
6.Have students recite homework	??	-
7.Give marks orally	??	+
8.Make students pass	??	OWM
9.Explain vocabulary(translate it)	??	NN
10.Speak in Hungarian	??	-
11.Enforce correct pronunciation	+	NN
12.Be a good teacher	+	+
13.Make students learn(memorize)	+	+
14.Make students study	+	+
15.Get students to pay attention	+	+
16.Know phonetic alphabet/spellings	+	+
17.Get or keep students interested	+	+
18.Hand out things	+	+
19.Give directions and orders	+	NN
20. Give advice	+	H/C
21.Hold class	+	MD
22.Walk around classroom	+	H/C
23.Teach	+	MD
24.Help slower students	+	SD, NP
25.Enforce correct grammar	+	DDW+
26.Check understanding of material	+	+
27.Bring things to class	+	+
28.Correct homework	+	+
29.Talk	+	+
30.Choose textbooks	+	+
31.Put students in pairs or groups	+	+
32.Play cassettes and videos	+	+
33.Explain grammar points	+	+
34.Answer questions	+	+
35.Speak in English	+	+
36.Write on blackboard	+	+
36.Make students understand	+	+
37.Make photocopies.	+	+
38.Give tests	+	+
39.Give homework	+	+
40.Give phonetic spellings	+	+
41.Run activities	+	+
42.Explain assignments	+	+
43.Question or quiz students	+	+
44.Correct tests	+	+
45.Choose activites	+	+
46.Prepare lessons	+	+
47.Give time limits for activities	+	+
48.Say students' names	+	+

+=good or should be done
N=Necessary
ND=never does
?=questionable
OWM=only when mandatory
NN=not necessary
DDW+=don't do would be good
-=should not be done
H/C=habit or custom
MD=must do
SD,NP=sometimesdo,notprofitable
D=just does
NI=not important
NDWR=never does would regret
SDSN=sometimes does
sometimes not

49.Tell students what to do	+	+
50.Make students speak English	+	+
51.Model structures	ND	NN
52.Talk with ostalyfonok/headmaster	D	MD
53.Translate English /Hungarian	D	NI
54.Make students stand, etc.	D	MD
55.Model pronunciation	D	NN
56.Write in naplo	D	MD
57.Take role	D	SDSN
58.Make students repeat pron/struct.	D	SDSN
59.Yell at students	NDWR	ND
60.Enforce Hazirend	ND	ND
61.Bring naplo to class	ND	OWM
62.Check students' mouths for gum	ND	ND
63.Justify grades	ND	+

Appendix B: Chart of Teacher Responses to Students Behaviors

	A	B	A=annoying
1.Making noises	A,ED	H,W	H=hates
2.Talking in Hungarian	A,ED	ED	W=worst
3.Sleeping	A	NH	ED=everyday
4.Drumming on the desk	A	NH	NH=never happened
5.Copying notes/doing homework	A	NH	NH=Not in Hazirend
6.Arguing with another student	A	W,NH	(every teacher's problem)
7.Hitting each other	A	W,NH	H=in Hazirend, but
8.Writing on themselves	A	NH	happens in every
9.Reading magazines	A	NH	teacher's class
10.Clicking pens	A	NH	SP=student's problem
11.Walking around *	A	NH	UIS=uninterested students
12.Reading other homework	A	NH	
13.Doing other homework	A	NH	R=report to OSTALY
14.Eating	A	H	CC=can't change
15.Drinking	A	H	BM=bad mark
16.Writing on desks	A	H	
17.Playing with a Gameboy	A	NH	
18.Listening to a Walkman	A	NH	
19.Drawing	A	SP	
20.Tickling / playing w/hair	A	SP,UIS	
21.Refusing to do an activity	SP	W,H	
22.Ignoring the teacher	SP	SP	
23.Chewing gum	SP	SP	
24.Does not attend class	SP	SP,R	
25.Late for class	SP,ED	SP,R	
26.Throwing things	H,R	NH	
27.Making rude gestures	W,H,R	NH	
28.Swearing in Hungarian	H,R	H	
29.Being cheeky or talking back	W,H,R	H	
30.Cheating	BM	H,W,BM	
31.No books or exercise books	BM	R,W,SP	
32.Complaining about grades/hwk	CC	ED	

*lets one student do it

Appendix C: Hazirend for Csokonai Vitez Mihalyi Gimanzium
as translated by Katalin Gabor

1. When the class bell rings pupils have to be in their own classroom.

a. The pupils' appearance should be neat, steady, and asthetic at school.

b. On leaving the classroom the desks should be left clean, empty, and tidy.

c. During schooltime pupils are not to leave the territory of the school (not even in breaks or free periods). However, on good grounds, with the permission of the home-room teacher, they can leave.

2. The PE teacher opens and locks the door of the dressing room of the gym and he/she keeps the key with him/her.

3. Holiday clothes (uniforms) are obligatory in our school:

Girls- dark shirt, middy/sailor blouse.

Boys- suit or dark trousers, white shirt

Pupils are to wear that at school festivals/holidays, opening/closing cerimonies of the school year, sixth-formers' dance, commencement exercise, final exams, and national holidays.

4. Pupils are to be present at classes, they can't miss them without a reason. Within 8 days after their absence they have to be excused for it. Doctors and parents can put down excuses of absence only in the students' reportbook. (Parents can excuse 3 days of absence during the year, the headmaster can dispose of 3 days. For any longer periods the permission of the headmaster is required).

a. The pupil's absence is unjustified and the doctor or parent can't excuse if the pupil is late for class 3 times. The date of being late should be seen and signed by the parent or the teacher at the student's hostel. After 10 unjustified classes there comes a punishment from the homeroom teacher and she/he sends a written message to the parents. After 20 unjustified classes there comes a punishment by the headmaster.

b. Each year, in each subject, the pupil is allowed to ask for two classes when he is exempted from response (with a reason), except for tests made known in advance. If the pupil loses his/her reportbook, he/she loses the above advantage.

c. In the case of the pupils who miss more than a third of a subject's classes per term/semestre, they have to give account for the material missed.

5. On the territory of the school smoking or drinking alcoholic drinks is prohibited.

6. The pupils(parents) are obliged to pay for any damage they have caused- this means the school museum too.

7. The school is not to be held responsible for any valuables (of the pupils).

8. These home rules apply to other school programs and class excursions, too.